



The Role of Physical Education and Sports in National Character Formation

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ABSTRACT

Physical Education and Sports play an important role in shaping national character because they not only focus on developing physical fitness but also on internalising character values. This study aims to examine the role of Physical Education and Sports in shaping students' character based on a literature review. The research method used is qualitative with a literature study (library research) approach, involving the exploration of relevant books, scientific journals, articles, and official documents. The data was analysed descriptively and analytically to gain a comprehensive understanding of the contribution of Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) to the formation of national character. The study results indicate that Physical Education and Sports learning is effective in instilling character values such as discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, responsibility, cooperation, and nationalism through physical activities that are contextual and based on direct experience. In addition, the role of physical education teachers as educators and role models of values is crucial to the successful character development of students. Therefore, Physical Education and Sports need to be optimised as an integral part of the national education system to support the strengthening of character education.

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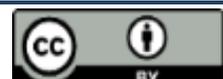
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A. Conception and design of the study;
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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in shaping the character of the nation's future generations. Education can no longer be understood solely as a process of knowledge transfer, but also as a process of forming values, attitudes, and behaviours (Harmanto et al., 2024). The National Education System Law states that the purpose of national education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. This goal indicates that character education is an integral part of the national education system.



One subject with great potential for character development in students is Physical Education and Sports (Fry & McNeill, 2011; Mohammed et al., 2025). Physical Education and Sports is not merely physical activity aimed at improving physical fitness, but a educational process that utilises movement activities as a means to achieve comprehensive educational goals, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Fuentes et al., 2024; Ц е р е т е л і et al., 2024). Through physical activities and sports, students are not only trained in movement skills and physical health, but also nurtured in mental, emotional, social, and moral attitudes (Iurii, 2020; Shubovich et al., 2016).

Physical Education and Sports have unique characteristics compared to other subjects. The learning process in Physical Education and Sports takes place through direct activity, social interaction, teamwork, and the application of clear rules and norms (Mawardi, Emayanti Anggraeni, Muhammad Fathurrahman, M Farhan, Alvina Halwa, 2025). In various game and sports activities, students are required to follow the rules, respect their opponents, accept victory and defeat with grace, and develop a sporting attitude. These values are an important element in the formation of a civilised national character with noble personality (Andriansyah, Atqo, et al., 2025; Ridha & Warni, 2024).

In addition, Physical Education and Sports also play a role in instilling values of discipline and responsibility (Andriansyah, Atqo, et al., 2025; Rusdin et al., 2023). Sports activities demand punctuality, consistency in training, and commitment in fulfilling each person's duties and roles (Munajad et al., 2024; Salahudin et al., 2024). Students learn that success cannot be achieved instantly, but rather through a process of hard work and perseverance. These values are highly relevant to the needs of the Indonesian nation in facing increasingly competitive global competition (Andriansyah, Atqo, et al., 2025).

In the context of national character building, Physical Education and Sports also contribute to fostering a sense of togetherness and unity. Sports activities, especially team sports, teach students to cooperate, support each other, and prioritise the group's interests over personal interests (Andriansyah, Alwasi, et al., 2025; Andriansyah, Atqo, et al., 2025). This experience serves as an effective means of instilling the values of mutual cooperation, solidarity, and tolerance, which are the essence of the Indonesian nation.

However, the strategic role of Physical Education and Sports in character building has not been fully and optimally utilised (Mwenda et al., 2023; Rees, 1997). In practice, Physical Education and Sports learning is still often overlooked and considered a supplementary subject. The focus of learning sometimes still emphasises physical skills and sports performance achievement, while character development aspects have not been systematically planned and implemented (Mawardi, Emayanti Anggraeni, Muhammad Fathurrahman, M Farhan, Alvina Halwa, 2025). This condition poses a challenge for educators and policymakers to reorient physical education and sports learning to be more balanced between physical achievement and character development (Susanto, 2012).

On the other hand, the competence and role of Physical Education and Sports teachers are crucial for the successful character development of students. Teachers not only play the role of instructors of motor skills but also as educators, mentors, and role models in attitude and behaviour (Mawardi et al., 2024). Values such as honesty,

discipline, hard work, and sportsmanship must be reflected in the attitudes and actions of teachers, so they can serve as a real example for students. Thus, character formation is not only conveyed through theory, but also through role modelling in learning practice.

The development of the national curriculum also demonstrates attention to strengthening character education through various subjects, including Physical Education and Sports. The current curriculum emphasises the importance of integrating character values into every learning process (Mawardi, Emayanti Anggraeni, Muhammad Fathurrahman, M Farhan, Alvina Halwa, 2025; Mawardi et al., 2024). Physical Education and Sports have great potential to implement this policy because character values can be instilled contextually and practically through movement activities and games. Therefore, a deep understanding is needed on how Physical Education and Sports can be designed and implemented effectively to support the formation of national character.

Character building through Physical Education and Sports is also in line with efforts to develop the Indonesian people as a whole (Munajad et al., 2024; Tian & Cao, 2023). A person who is physically and mentally healthy is the main asset in national development. Good physical health will support productivity and quality of life, while strong character will be the foundation for behaviour and decision-making (Andriansyah, Alwasi, et al., 2025; Subekti et al., 2024). Thus, Physical Education and Sports not only contribute to health aspects but also to the formation of the personality and morals of the younger generation.

Based on the description, it can be understood that Physical Education and Sports play a very important and strategic role in shaping national character. Through physical activities and sports designed educationally, students can develop various positive character values needed in community and national life. Therefore, a study on the role of Physical Education and Sports in shaping national character becomes very relevant and important to conduct. This article is written to deeply examine the role of Physical Education and Sports in shaping national character, by reviewing concepts, character values that can be developed, and their implications for teaching practices in schools.

METHODS

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative method with a literature study (library research) approach. This method was chosen because it aims to deeply examine the concepts, roles, and contributions of Physical Education and Sports in character building based on theory and previous research findings.

Data Source

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data, obtained through various written references such as physical education textbooks, national and international scientific journals, scientific articles, government regulations, and official documents related to character education and sports. These references were selected selectively, considering the relevance, currency, and credibility of the sources.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques were carried out through the tracing and review of documents related to character values in physical education, such as discipline, sportsmanship, responsibility, cooperation, honesty, and nationalism. The data obtained were then recorded, classified, and systematically arranged according to the focus of the research discussion.

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive-analytical techniques, which involved breaking down, interpreting, and connecting various concepts and findings from library sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of Physical Education and Sports in national character development. The analysis results are presented in a systematic and logical narrative form.

Data Validity

To maintain data validity, the researcher conducted source triangulation, which involved comparing and matching information obtained from various references to ensure the study's findings were more objective and scientifically accountable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the literature review indicate that physical education and sports are effective media for internalising character values in students. Through physical activity and sports, students directly experience the learning process of values such as discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, responsibility, and cooperation. These values are not only conveyed theoretically but are practiced in real-life situations, such as following game rules, respecting opponents, and accepting match results with a positive attitude.

Physical education and sports provide contextual and meaningful learning experiences, making it easier for character values to be instilled in students. This process contributes to the formation of attitudes and behaviours that reflect the nation's character, such as upholding the values of justice, togetherness, and mutual respect in community life.

The literature analysis also revealed that physical education and sports play an important role in shaping social attitudes and a sense of nationalism. Group sports activities foster a spirit of unity, solidarity, and mutual cooperation. Students learn to work together towards a common goal, putting aside personal interests and appreciating differences in individual abilities, backgrounds, and character.

Additionally, sports can be a means of instilling patriotism and national pride. Through sports activities in school environments and national sporting events, students are introduced to national values such as unity, fighting spirit, and pride in national identity. This strengthens the role of physical education and sports in supporting the formation of national character based on Pancasila values.

The study results indicate that physical education teachers play a strategic role in the process of national character formation through sports education. Teachers not only

serve as instructors of motor skills but also as educators of values and role models for students. The attitude, behaviour, and teaching methods of teachers in managing learning greatly influence the successful instilling of character values.

Physical education teachers who can integrate character values into every learning activity, such as through enforcing rules, giving appreciation, and reflecting after activities, will have a positive impact on students' character development. Therefore, the pedagogical and personality competencies of teachers are important factors in optimising the role of physical education and sports as a means of character building for the nation.

Based on the results of the literature review, physical education and sports make a significant contribution to the sustainable development of national character. Students who are accustomed to positive values through physical activity and sports tend to have a disciplined, resilient, and responsible attitude, and a strong sense of community. These characters are the main capital in building an integrated and competitive nation.

Thus, physical education and sports need to be placed as an integral part of the national education system. Optimising the role of physical education and sports in shaping national character requires support from education policies, improving the quality of learning, and providing adequate facilities and infrastructure so that the goals of character education can be achieved optimally.

Discussion

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be understood that physical education and sports hold a strategic position in the national education system, particularly in efforts to build national character. Physical education is not only orientated towards developing physical aspects, but also serves as a vehicle for value education integrated into movement activities. This aligns with the holistic education paradigm, which emphasises the balance between the physical, mental, social, and moral development of learners.

The internalisation of character values through physical education and sports occurs naturally and contextually. Sports activities present real-life situations that demand participants to be disciplined, honest, sportsmanlike, and responsible. The experiential learning process makes character values not only cognitively understood but also internalised and practiced in daily behaviour. Thus, physical education has an advantage over theoretical learning approaches in instilling character.

In addition, physical education and sports also play an important role in shaping social and national attitudes. Team sports activities foster a spirit of cooperation, solidarity, and mutual assistance, which are noble values of the Indonesian nation. Through social interaction in sports activities, students learn to appreciate differences, control their emotions, and put the common good above personal interests. These values are an important foundation for building an inclusive and civilised national character.

The role of physical education teachers is a key factor in the successful formation of character through sports. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering motor skills

material, but also serve as facilitators, guides, and role models for character values. The way teachers manage learning, enforce rules, provide reinforcement, and reflect on values after activities is crucial to the effectiveness of character education. Therefore, the professionalism and integrity of physical education teachers need to be continuously improved so that the goals of character education can be achieved optimally.

Overall, this discussion confirms that physical education and sports are strategic instruments in building national character. However, optimising this role requires support from various parties, including education policies that favour strengthening PJOK, providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, and synergy between schools, families, and the community. With proper management, physical education and sports can significantly contribute to shaping a healthy, characterful, and competitive generation of the nation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that Physical Education and Sports play a very strategic role in shaping national character. Through planned physical activity and sports, physical education not only contributes to the development of students' fitness and motor skills but also serves as an effective medium for instilling character values such as discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, responsibility, cooperation, leadership, and a sense of nationalism. Learning processes based on direct experience make the internalisation of character values occur naturally, contextually, and sustainably. In addition, the role of physical education teachers as educators, facilitators, and role models of values is crucial for the successful formation of character through sports. Therefore, physical education and sports need to be placed as an integral part of the national education system. It is recommended that schools and policymakers provide stronger support for the implementation of physical education learning by providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, improving teacher competence, and implementing curriculum policies that emphasise character education. For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct empirical research to strengthen the findings of this study, particularly regarding the implementation of physical education and sports in shaping national character at various educational levels.

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